



STATE OF MAINE

WIOA Performance Report

Program Year 2017

Submitted by
The Maine Department of Labor
Bureau of Employment Services

December 2018

Contents

Introduction	3
State Plan Implementation	5
RSI DWG	5
Licensing and Credentialing	5
Department of Corrections	5
Policies	6
WIOA Statewide Performance Report Narrative.....	6
Waivers.....	6
Effectiveness Serving Employers	6
State Set-Aside Demonstration Projects	7
Accelerated English Language Acquisition Pilot	7
Youth Employment Steps to Success Outreach and Awareness Project	7
Program Evaluation	8
Common Exit Programs	9
Performance Goals	9
Data Element Validation.....	10
Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activity	11
Maine At Work Initiative.....	12
Promising Practices	12
Maine Hire-A-Vet.....	12
Innovative Approaches to Apprenticeship	13
Customer Satisfaction	13
Local Sector and Career Pathways Efforts.....	14
Appendices	18
Appendix A Customer Satisfaction Survey	18
On the Job Training (OJT).....	18
Maine Job Link.....	18
WIOA Participant Survey.....	18
Maine JobLink self-services job match tool.....	19

Introduction

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires each state that receives an allotment under WIOA Title I and III to prepare and submit a WIOA Annual Report of progress to the Secretary of Labor in accordance with the WIOA Common Performance Reporting OMB Control No.1205-0526.

Maine's Strategic vision and goals address the requirements of WIOA and creates a meaningful plan for the future. The success of Maine's economy will ultimately be determined by the strength of its workforce. Maine is committed to the work outlined in the Unified State Plan and continues to make progress in implementing the elements as written in it. This report describes efforts during PY 17 which contribute toward those goals and achieving the vision:

VISION

- Maine leads in talent, technology and innovation attracting investment from all over the world
- Maine's economy is fueled by an education system that is inclusive and meets the needs of diverse learners
- Through partnerships with industry and the workforce development system Maine workers are well prepared with skills to succeed
- Workforce development system is highly visible, and an easily accessed network of programs and activities designed to increase employment, earnings and retention
- It is data and demand driven with multiple points of entry for workers and job seekers
- Supports the attainment of recognized credentials, resulting in improved quality of the workforce, meets the skill requirements of employers and enhances productivity and competitiveness of Maine

STATE STRATEGIES

- Increase the Relevance of the Workforce Development System (WDS) to Employers
- Produce an Educated and Skilled Workforce
- Align Commitment and Investment in Workforce
- Increase Operational Effectiveness of WDS
- Grow and Diversify Maines Workforce
- Create and Align Outreach and Communications

GOALS

- Maine will have an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers
- Maine will enhance and align its WDS to be more responsive to the needs of businesses
- Develop and implement systematic approach to engaging with employers
- Develop sector partnerships to create pipeline of skilled workers
- Maine will meet federally required performance measures

The Maine Department of Labor is committed to providing access, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation to its services, programs and employment. If you required accommodation or alternative format materials please request at:

Maine Department of Labor – Bureau of Employment Services
55 State House Station 45 Commerce Drive
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 624-7981 - TTY Users Call Maine Relay 711

The State of Maine, Bureau of Employment Services is submitting this document on December 3, 2018 in response to the WIOA requirement.

State Plan Implementation

Maine's WIOA steering team continues to track and document implementation of the Maine's unified plan. The team of core partners convene regularly to address plan elements, establish project teams and monitor progress. Plan implementation progress slowed in 2017 when Governor LePage petitioned USDOL to consolidate or eliminate a layer of WIOA administration to streamline the system and increase the amount of resources available for participant training. Maine is now regaining implementation momentum.

RSI DWG

Maine applied for and received a Reemployment and System Integration-Dislocated Worker Grant (RSI-DWG) to explore an integrated referral and intake solution. This planning grant provided resources to complete a request for proposals and begin the first phase of implementation. A complete implementation would enhance data sharing between the core partners by connecting their case management systems, allowing for shared participant information. It would also provide a single point of entry to participating programs.

Licensing and Credentialing

In 2018, Maine passed legislation that makes it easier for veterans to transfer military education and training to civilian healthcare credentials.

An Act to Expedite Health Care Employment for Military Veterans¹ creates a framework where eligible veterans may get assistance using a “military to civilian crosswalk”, to identify matches and gaps in military training, education, and experience to civilian requirements and to receive credits for military experience and credentials. This law recognizes and honors skills gained in United States Armed Forces and National Guard and can greatly reduce or eliminate barriers to obtaining civilian healthcare licenses and employment,

Maine will pursue using this model for other occupations.

Credential conversion for individuals with licenses and education obtained abroad continues to be a barrier to employment for immigrants. Many immigrants are underemployed due to the difficulty in converting their education and experience into credentials and licenses in the United States. A group of stakeholders continue to pursue solutions to this barrier for immigrants.

Department of Corrections

Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) and the Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) expanded its relationship to better prepare soon-to-be-released inmates. As a result, the Mountain View Correctional Facility became a sponsor of a carpenter apprenticeship program and the Maine State Prison became a sponsor of a guide dog training apprenticeship program. The guide dog training program targets incarcerated veterans as apprentice trainers of guide dogs that when trained, will be assigned to other veterans. Additionally, the Department of Corrections will soon become a sponsor for apprenticeship programs at all Maine Department of Corrections facilities.

In September, MDOL and MDOC held a stakeholder informational session at the Maine State Prison so employers and other interested parties could learn about MDOC workforce programs

¹ http://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/bills_128th/chapters/PUBLIC326.asp

and hear testimonials from prisoners and partner employers. The testimonials demonstrated the importance and success of these efforts. Feedback from over 120 stakeholders who attended the event demonstrates a clear interest and motivation to participate in recruitment and training partnerships that will result in immediate job opportunities for newly released ex-offenders.

Policies

The Universal Access Team, a work group of the Steering Committee, issued a policy to core partner agencies on accessibility and nondiscrimination. Staff from each agency received formal training on how to implement the requirements of the policy. In addition, the team developed an accessibility guide for staff from each partner agency to use to ensure workshops, materials, and technology used by the partners are accessible. The team identified a catalog of staff development resources and recommendations for local boards on how to assess the accessibility of the one-stops.

WIOA Statewide Performance Report Narrative

Waivers

Maine has no waivers in place currently.

Effectiveness Serving Employers

Core partners are using the Maine Department of Labor's management information system, Maine JobLink (MJL), to enter employer service information. The Maine Department of Labor submits the annual effectiveness report on behalf of core partners using the data entered into the system. The State selected two effectiveness measures, "Employer Penetration" and "Repeat Business." Core partners participated in drafting a policy regarding the documentation of employer services. Partners help employers create an account in Maine JobLink if one does not exist. An MJL account gives employers access to self-serve and staff-assisted labor exchange services and informational resources. It also serves as the data repository for employer service documentation.

A guide was developed to provide all partner staff information regarding:

- The wide range of benefits associated with an MJL account,
- The employer account and job order approval process,
- The use of aggregate data reporting to keep individual employer account data secure,
- The types and levels of services tracked in the account, and
- The importance of timely data entry.

Employers with accounts can view services provided by one-stop partners. Partners can view services provided by other partners enabling them to be more effective and efficient with businesses and to learn how to represent partner services to other employers. The joint use of the system promotes an integrated approach to service delivery, access to a menu of partner services, elimination of unnecessary duplicate visits, and a blend of services customized to employer need.

Of the 49,618 business establishments in Maine, 5,408 received services last year, a penetration rate of 10.9%. Over two years, 59.2% took advantage of repeat services. Establishment counts of the specific types of services tracked in the system for PY17:

➤ Employer Information and Support Services	936
➤ Workforce Recruitment Assistance	5,331
➤ Engaged in Strategic Planning Services	7
➤ Accessing Untapped Labor Pools	19
➤ Training Services	63
➤ Business Downsizing Assistance	15*

*Rapid Response Services were provided to more than 15 businesses during the program year. To maintain employer confidentiality regarding future lay-offs, staff enter rapid response services into system only after layoffs have been made public. See the report segment on Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion for more detail.

State Set-Aside Demonstration Projects

Accelerated English Language Acquisition Pilot

Low unemployment levels created a critical labor force shortage for Maine employers, particularly in Southern Maine. Cumberland County experiences the lowest unemployment rate and the most unfilled job openings. The State Plan directs the system to develop methods to bring previously untapped labor pools into the workforce. Portland, Maine's largest city located in Cumberland county, has a significant population of immigrants and refugees who are authorized to work but lack the necessary English proficiency to enter employment. This population comes with occupational skills attained in their native countries.

Current English as a second language education offerings in the region include classroom training of between 3 to 5 hours a week. At this pace, it could take an average English as a second language learner six years to increase his/her English language proficiency to an eighth-grade level.

The goal of this pilot is to accelerate English language proficiency attainment by providing intensive training designed to increase learner's Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) from 2 to 5 in a matter of months. The method includes provision of intensive, vocationally-specific, English language immersion training for 20 hours a week, for six-weeks. Resources provided will fund two cohorts of 15 to 20 students and will offer a series of four six-week cohort sessions. The first cohort of classes is expected to begin in January 2019.

Youth Employment Steps to Success Outreach and Awareness Project

The MDOL Commissioner's office sponsored an education and outreach project aimed at educating younger workers, parents, schools and employers about hiring younger workers to fill summer jobs. The project involved partners from the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Tourism, Jobs for Maine Graduates, the Maine Hospitality Association and Title IB and Title III WIOA service providers across the state.

Youth Employment and the Steps to Success was introduced to boost youth employment during the summer to fill all job openings but particularly to meet the needs of the Maine's hospitality and tourism sectors in dire need of workers. Most summer youth camps stop serving youth beyond age 13 leaving most youth aged 14 to 15 with few options for the summer.

Through a series of information sessions offered at Maine CareerCenters and some high schools, employers, youth, parents, youth service program providers and school superintendents were informed about the new streamlined process for obtaining work permits for youth ages 14 to 15.

Employers were informed about youth labor laws, the permit process, safety standards, recruitment methods and incentives that employers in the tourism sector could take advantage of for hiring new labor force entrants. The incentive was funded through a tourism grant of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and consisted of a cash reimbursement of approximately \$3.00/hour for each hour of employment up to a cap of \$500 per new hire.

Students and parents were informed about youth labor laws and the types of jobs that are available to younger workers, where to look for the job openings, how to prepare to succeed on the job, and more.

In addition, a webpage was developed on the CareerCenter website² from which employers, parents and teens could access information on:

- Maine Employment Law and Practices
- Maine Guide to Employing Minors
- Employers Guide to Youth Employment
- Is My Job Safe for Teens?
- Child Labor Poster
- Work Permit Law, form, and instructions
- Maine JobLink
- Employer Workshop information and locations
- Student and Parent Workshop information and locations
- What occupations are safe for my teen?

Program Evaluation

The program evaluation project initially proposed in the four-year unified plan was focused on evaluating differences between the long-term outcomes of participants enrolled in work-based training versus those enrolled in classroom training. Because it would be difficult to establish control groups that would be similar (barriers, experience, existing skills, etc.), the prospective evaluators questioned whether the results would be statistically acceptable therefore the project was tabled.

Another evaluation study was considered, one pertaining to outcomes of the accelerated English language emersion pilot. Members of the Maine Muskie School of Public Service, an arm of the University of Southern Maine that conducts research studies, provided a great deal of information on the possible aspects of the pilot that could be evaluated, the methods that could be utilized

² Youth Employment and the Steps to Success website <http://www.mainecareercenter.gov/yes/>

and more. However, it was determined that the level of rigor and ultimate end-cost associated with the study would not result in appropriate return on investment, so the idea was not pursued.

Common Exit Programs

Maine can set common exits for specific workforce programs for which report data is tracked in Maine JobLink. The following programs are currently set as common exit programs for the purposes of continuity of participant services.

- Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth;
- National Dislocated Worker Grants;
- Title III Employment Services (Wagner-Peyser);
- Trade Adjustment Assistance;
- WANTO Grant participants; and
- Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP).

Performance Goals

Maine has not implemented any state-specific performance measures.

States must meet at least 90% of the negotiated level to pass performance criteria. The state met or exceeded the negotiated levels on all measures except the Adult and Youth program credential attainment rate.

After considerable examination, there are several reasons why this occurred that the State and local areas are working to address:

- a. WIOA was initially implemented in PY16 during the same period Maine began using a new MIS data system for case management and performance tracking and reporting purposes. Staff were grappling with learning and implementing both a new law and a new MIS system which proved extremely challenging;
- b. There was significant staff turnover at the service provider level resulting in inexperienced staff unclear on who or when a WIOA participant is included in the credential attainment measure;
- c. Similarly, staff were learning how data must be entered in the new system and although staff had recorded when a participant successfully completed training, they did not always enter the data into an additional outcomes screen required for inclusion in the quarterly report. In some instances, this issue was not discovered until beyond the fourth quarter after exit, the timeframe in which credential attainment can be reported and so despite the participant having attained the credential, it was too late to get the credit for the measure.
- d. Compounding this is the fact that the reporting systems at both the State and Federal levels were undergoing frequent changes and improvements and it was not possible to simply re-upload the late data into the report system.
- e. Some participants were enrolled in training that resulted in employment, but not a credential. This is allowable; however, it has a negative impact because all participants enrolled in any form of educational or occupational training are included in the credential attainment measure;
- f. In other cases, participants were successfully completing the training, but not taking the exams to attain the credential or license before entering employment;

- g. Finally, approximately 15% of participants on average exited without completing the training. This may be due to the current availability of good paying jobs or may be due to the need for better up-front assessment of preparedness to successfully complete training.

To address the issue, the State has been working on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that provide step-by-step detail on data entry points required by the MJL system to correctly track and report the credential attainment measure. These are in addition to regularly updated user guides provided by the system.

Local areas are already taking steps to ensure the credential attainment measure will be achieved in the future, including:

- Training all staff on how to data enter credential outcome information;
- Emphasizing training that results in a recognized credential as well as employment;
- Expanding assessment of participants' readiness for training;
- Increasing services that support successful completion of training such as providing tutoring;
- Securing employer input on the types and levels of credentials they value and the training institutions they feel develop the best-prepared employees;
- Carefully examining cases that comprise the credential pools in order to:
 - Determine whether any combination of factors can be controlled, such as the types of occupations with the most successful completion outcomes;
 - Identifying patterns of service provision resulting in successful completion of training and attainment of credentials that can be replicated by all career advisors; and
 - Identifying specific staff interventions that may be required.
- Tightening up the oversight of the case management process to ensure certifications are documented accurately in MJL;
- Tailoring follow-up services to ensure capture of credential attainment occurring after exit; and
- Sharing the outcomes of these efforts across all three local areas to promote replication of best practices.

The Bureau of Employment Services started providing mini training sessions after each new release of the information system. The training covers changes in options in selection and dropdown menus related to the elements being documented, and other aspects staff need to be aware of as system improvements are implemented.

Data Element Validation

In lieu of guidance on data element validation for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs, Maine has continued to follow the last guidance issued in TEGL 22-15 pertaining to WIA program requirements. The state workforce agency (Bureau of Employment Services) has undergone major staff reductions over the past two years and as such is in the process of moving toward a paperless documentation system. Copies of all validation documents are now being uploaded into each participant file in Maine JobLink. The document upload portion of the system labels the type and purpose of the documents being uploaded. This allows file documentation review to take place from the central office, essentially eliminating the need to travel to offices to

review documents and eliminating the need to transport personally identifiable information between offices.

Participant file documentation reviews occur both annually and randomly to ensure that validation documentation is uploaded. As new documentation requirements come forth, staff are apprised and provided with new guidance, for example changes to the documents that validate identity and eligibility to work in the United States which get updated about every two years or so.

Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activity

Rapid response was conducted with 51 employers during the program year, 903 workers were provided with information on how to access employment and training services, health insurance options, unemployment insurance claims, information about WIOA dislocated worker services and more. In instances where a trade petition was filed, sessions offering more in-depth information on the trade assistance services are held with all trade-affected workers.

Rapid response sessions are generally provided by a team of staff from various agencies, including Bureau of Employment Services (BES), Bureau of Unemployment Compensation (BUC), Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), providers of Dislocated Worker programs including Aroostook County Action Program, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, Western Maine Community Action, and Workforce Solutions as appropriate. Other partners participate in providing information, including local Adult Education providers and community-based organizations from banks to housing authorities. Depending on the size of the layoff, community action teams are brought together to identify and allocate community resources for the affected workers.

Rapid response sessions are held at the worksite or at a one-stop center, community center or school close to the worksite. Sessions provide an opportunity for affected workers to ask questions and complete a needs assessment. Responses to the needs assessment result in direct referrals to partner agencies which may provide workshops on job getting, using the Maine JobLink system, updating resumes and cover letters, interviewing and more. If employers are amenable, workshops can be delivered at the worksite and in some cases, will occur before the final layoff date. When community assistance teams are involved, those partners may also provide workshops including information on paying off credit card debt and working with debt collectors or providing information on self-employment possibilities.

Once the layoff has been announced, employers looking to hire workers with similar skills are contacted to determine possible direct referrals or to participate in customized job fairs for affected workers.

The Trade Act program director provided training to state-wide Title IB program staff on the benefits and requirements of co-enrollment of Trade program participants into the Dislocated Worker program. Maine's Title IB providers are also providers of services through national dislocated worker grants (NDWG).

Maine has a long-standing requirement of co-enrollment of Trade-affected workers into NDWG grants, thus most IB provider staff have worked in close collaboration with Trade program staff to jointly deliver services. Title IB program providers receive information gathered from needs surveys conducted during rapid response sessions. Rapid response team leads coordinate

services with each provider on behalf of affected workers. Survey data is used to determine whether an application for national dislocated worker funds may be necessary.

If the need is warranted, rapid response funds are used to hire peer support workers who provide one-on-one assistance to workers in their local communities.

Maine At Work Initiative

Maine employs all the regular early warning systems and recently deployed a system designed to get direct input from employers regarding their workforce needs and challenges. Known as Maine-at-Work³, the activity is initiated through an internet site that identifies services and allows the employer to submit an inquiry regarding assistance needed. Each employer receives a personal response from staff of the Bureau of Employment Services. Staff conduct a needs assessment to identify the nature of services the employer could benefit from.

Staff from multiple service provider agencies have been trained on the precept of the Maine-At-Work approach and are listed as partners on the website. Maine at Work can quickly implement collaborative service approaches on behalf of a company facing challenges.

Resources to address employer needs jointly include:

- Wagner-Peyser funded employee recruitment and placement services;
- Title IB On-the-Job, Customized and Incumbent Worker training services;
- Maine Apprenticeship Program assistance;
- Northern Border Regional Grant assistance;
- Competitive Skills Scholarship Program assistance for businesses;
- Economic development partner programs;
- Maine Quality Centers and Maine Community College assistance;
- Adult Education Services;
- Assistance applying for Work Opportunity Tax Credits and Federal Bonding;
- Assistance accessing and training untapped labor pools, including individuals with disabilities, English language learners, ex-offenders, younger workers and in some instances migrant seasonal workers.

Maine is in the process of compiling two layoff aversion guides, one directed to employers that will promote use of Maine-At-Work and one directed to staff (rapid response teams and partner program staff) that explains how resources can be packaged to address employer needs.

Promising Practices

Maine Hire-A-Vet

The Maine Department of Labor conducted the third annual Hire-a-Vet campaign in PY2017. The goal each year is to engage 100 employers to hire 100 veterans in 100 days. Hire-a-Vet Campaign outcomes for program year 2017:

- 154 employers signed on to the campaign;
- 110 employers attended Military Culture 202 training;
- 296 veterans were hired;

³ Maine at Work website <https://www.maine.gov/maineatwork/index.shtml>

- 63 female veterans were hired;
- 21 veteran spouse and/or family member were hired;
- The average hourly wage of veterans hired was \$23.16 / hour.

Maine held a Kick-off event on August 30, 2018 to launch its fourth year promoting the hire of veterans. The event was attended by 251 employers and 525 job seekers of which 33% were veterans. The event hosted 19 Veteran resource tables and 13 Veterans took advantage of the Hilton Honors accommodations program to participate in the hiring fair. Hilton Hotels provide free overnight accommodations to Veterans who live more than 40 miles away from the hiring event.

The fourth campaign outcomes so far:

- 184 participating employers;
- 95 Veterans placed in jobs; and
- 90 employers registered to attend Military Culture 202 training;

Innovative Approaches to Apprenticeship

Over the past year, the Maine Apprenticeship Program has taken enormous strides to make registered apprenticeship the premier employee development tool for Maine industries. In addition to greatly expanding outreach to employers, educators, workforce service providers and others, the program has introduced a new method to engage workforce providers and industry associations as sponsors of the program. The goal of having agencies as sponsors is to reduce paperwork for the employer.

Two workforce service provider agencies have come on board to act as sponsors of apprenticeship, Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) -also recipients of the federal Women in Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Occupations (WANTO) grant two years in a row and Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), an agency whose other arm provides economic development services to several Counties. Workforce development agencies are situated to package title IB resources for apprenticeship and to promote the hire and training of participants from the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs.

Referred to as “intermediary apprenticeship sponsors” these agencies act as the administrators, who develop agreements with the employers that detail program requirements, on-the-job learning, classroom training, and wage increases. They submit the programs to the Maine Apprenticeship Council for approval and mentor the employer and the apprentice. Intermediary sponsors work with educational institutions that provide the related instruction.

Industry associations can also act as the intermediary sponsor on behalf of its members. Maine’s tourism industry has been challenged to find workers during this era of extremely low unemployment. The Maine Hospitality Association, a recent merger of the Maine Innkeepers and Maine Restaurant Associations, has become one of the newest sponsors of apprenticeship. They have partnered with the Maine Community College System to provide apprenticeship programs in culinary arts and lodging. Employer members of the association employ the apprentices who apply skills learned in their courses while on the job.

Customer Satisfaction

The Bureau of Employment Services (BES) conducted four customer satisfaction surveys two directed to employers and two directed to job seekers.

Employer Surveys

- On the Job Training (OJT) satisfaction survey
- Maine JobLink (labor exchange system) survey

Customer Surveys

- WIOA participant survey
- Maine Job Link self-service job matching survey

For survey questions see Appendix B: Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Local Sector and Career Pathways Efforts

Eastern Maine Development Corporation: WIOA IB Service Provider serving Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock and Washington Counties

Manufacturing in Piscataquis County: Eastern Maine Development Corp., is working with the Penobscot Valley Adult Education Cooperative, Piscataquis County Economic Development Corporation, Eastern Maine Community College and Puritan Medical Products in Guilford to deliver a series of outreach, recruitment and training services to promote employment in the manufacturing sector in Piscataquis County. The team conducted employee interviews at Puritan regarding skills required by Puritan. The input was used to design a **Train-the-Trainer** program to be delivered by Eastern Maine Community College to 50 front-line mentors and supervisors at Puritan. A **Manufacturing Academy** training program developed by the community college and adult education to prepare job seekers for employment in manufacturing companies throughout the region will be delivered in PY2018

Hancock County Recovery Workforce Project: EMDC in cooperation with the Hancock County Jail, the Open-Door Recovery Center, and the Northeastern Workforce Development Board is offering services to individuals re-entering the community from incarceration and local recovery programs. The Hancock County Recovery Workforce Project (HCRWP) is a collaborative effort designed by the partners to provide employability skills training followed by work-based training or education leading to unsubsidized employment. The program has worked with over 50 jail and recovery participants. Participants meet once a week for eight weeks to conduct labor market research; establish a realistic career goal and a plan to achieve the goal; complete a resume and cover letter; practice interviewing skills; talk with employers to understand their expectations; practice budgeting, gain financial management skills; and better understand how to use community support systems. Some participated in short-term paid work experience. Funding for the project is provided by the Hancock County Commission and supplemented by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds for eligible individuals.

Aroostook County Action Program, Inc.: WIOA IB Service Provider serving Aroostook County

Sector strategies and employer outreach: One in ten jobs in Aroostook County are in manufacturing; healthcare employment makes up the largest share of employment representing 30 percent of jobs. Aroostook County, a region as large as Connecticut and Rhode Island combined, necessitates efficient employer engagement and sector-based strategies are the best way to do that. Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP), received a Women in Apprenticeship

and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant which dovetails with WIOA activity and allow leveraging of existing sector-based work activity.

Western Maine Community Action: WIOA IB Service Provider serving Androscoggin, Franklin, Oxford, Kennebec, and Somerset Counties

In Central Western Maine, the service provider focuses most of WIOA funding on employer driven training. they use this approach because employers have difficulty finding individuals with the unique skills or experience necessary to fill their openings. In addition, many job seekers prefer short-term training that will lead to stable employment.

Maine has an older workforce with many looking to retire within the next five years. The number of young people entering the labor force is significantly below the number aging out and many in the labor force lack the skills needed for the available jobs. Maine has a growing immigrant base; yet, these new Mainers face a number of barriers including lack of understanding of the U.S. work culture, it is imperative that the workforce development system consider and prepare *all* prospective labor force participants to meet the demands.

The Title IB provider, Western Maine Community Action (WMCA), works with community organizations, educational institutions, employers, and state training programs to package services from recruitment to placement. WMCA conducts marketing, informational sessions, pre-screening, and comprehensive assessments to determine basic academic skill levels; transferrable skill; employment goals, and support service needs and works with employers on selection, enrollment, training, placement, and follow-up of appropriate participants. All partners are involved in all phases of the process from design to implementation. Work-based training includes any or a combination of the following:

- Occupational skills training: classroom training that leads to a credential and meets the needs of the employer
- Customized training: classroom training where the employer determines the type of training necessary; assists in the selection of the participants (from the applicant pool); pays up to 50% of the training costs; and, obtains skilled workers.
- On-the-Job-Training: training takes place at the business; employer selects the participant to be trained (from the applicant pool); up to 50% of the participant's wages are reimbursed during the training; obtain skilled worker.
- Apprenticeship: combination of on the job training (OJT) and classroom training; employer selects the participant (from applicant pool); assistance with tuition costs; obtain skilled worker.

In addition to the skill training, work readiness skills geared toward the industry sector help trainees understand employer expectations.

While this service provider also assists individuals with training who may have interests and needs that fall outside of work-based training projects, work-based training has several benefits, including:

- Employer involvement from start to finish;
- Community partnerships collaborating to grow the workforce;
- Short-term training that keeps job seekers engaged and gets them to work quickly
- Training that leads to opportunities for advancement

Appendix C, CWMWDB SP-NEG projects summary, shows the projects Western Maine Community Action has been involved in this past year. These projects have used a combination of WIOA IB, SP-NEG, CSSP, and private funds from the John T. Gorman foundation. WMCA completed a third construction trades project eight candidates, were enrolled. WMCA, Lewiston CareerCenter, The John T. Gorman foundation, Lewiston Ad Ed, several community partners, and several businesses were involved. A combination of funds was used to cover the classroom tuition and work experience and OJT wages. Training topics included: WorkReady, OSHA 10, Construction Scissor Lift training and Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) followed by the construction training work experience for the next 8 weeks. Seven of the candidates were placed in employment.

Best Practices and Success Stories:

Western Maine Community Action made effective use of testimonials in their training and marketing materials. Testimonials from participants and employers are demonstrated below:

"It is very impressive when a country seeks to help immigrants in one way or another. The skills that I had from my country helped me to take the first steps in the United States but it was not enough for consideration with a good job. I needed technical and professional training in the USA. With so many trainings that the host country has, it was a very wise choice for me. I chose the MANUFACTURING training that WMCA/CAREER CENTER offered. It has been especially helpful to me. This training is ready to work safely, and is acquaints one with the American customary system. Today, I still feel good as a Technician because I learned things during this training that helped me. Thanks to the experience of all the team at WMCA/CAREER CENTER, and especially the school staff at Northeast Technical Institute in Lewiston. I learned this a lot of material in the MANUFACTURING training. I appeal to anyone who wants to learn more, to contact the Career Center in general, and in particular NTI, and Lewiston-Auburn Adult Education for a good adaptation to the system of working and studying in the USA. I thank anyone who helped me directly or indirectly to undertake this training." - **Mpaka Lumbizimbizi, Participant**

"We here at Hahnel Bros. Co. are impressed with the successful completion of the third Construction Class of the Work Experience. The applicants that worked at Hahnel Bros. Co. were well prepared for our type of work and they understood the expectations for employment with the company. The cultural awareness training we received was excellent and insightful. The impactful training was very beneficial and a major factor in the smooth integration of the applicants into our workforce. The experience was very good, we have offered employment to three applicants, and we look forward to the next class." **Alan Hahnel, Employer**

Workforce Solutions: WIOA IB Service Provider serving Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Cumberland, and York Counties.

Career Pathways / Sector activity: For several years, Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) has taken an employer-focused approach to addressing the skilled worker shortage in their region, as well as working on creating career pathways and opportunities for growth for job seekers. After considerable analysis, CCWI selected five key industry sectors which were deemed essential to the growth of their regional economy:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Banking and Financial Services
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Transportation and Logistics

Their work consisted of identifying these five sectors as economic engines that create high-demand, high-opportunity jobs and collaborating with employers and industry leaders, as well as higher education, adult education, and training programs to identify the skills, education, training, and credentials needed for success within these sectors.

This career pathway and sector partnership work first entailed identifying the workforce problems to be solved:

- Recruiting and/or retraining key employees
- Pinpointing the stagnation of wages or industry growth
- Finding the skill barriers (lack of industry-specific skills needed)
- Identifying the skills needed to move into higher positions
- Determining what resources are available to give front-line staff training
- Locating and filling the gaps and barriers to employment

Workforce Solutions is designating a “Sector Strategies Program Coordinator” to oversee business relations throughout the region. This position will focus on developing strategies within each sector that promotes the development of career pathways and placement of WIOA clients. Supporting this effort in local counties will be Career Advisors, who will carry the dual client focus of jobseeker and employer clients.

Appendices

Appendix A Customer Satisfaction Survey

On the Job Training (OJT)

The OJT satisfaction survey will query the level of satisfaction of employers using the following questions:

1. How satisfied were you with the OJT contract process and program overall?
2. How satisfied were you with staff-assistance provided throughout the contract period?
3. How satisfied were you with the pool of candidates from which to select OJT trainees?
4. How satisfied were you with the OJT reimbursement process?

The following questions required only a yes or no answer:

5. Were the requirements and expectations of the OJT contract clearly explained?
6. Was the quality and readiness of the OJT trainee what you expected?
7. Would you recommend the OJT program to other employers?

Finally, the survey will allow space of 500 characters for a comment on the services.

Maine Job Link

The Maine JobLink (labor exchange system) survey will query the level of satisfaction of employers using the following questions:

1. How satisfied were you with the ease of the self-service process of listing job openings on Maine JobLink?
2. How satisfied were you with staff assistance provided?
3. How satisfied were you with the number and quality of job seekers referred from the Maine JobLink?

The following questions required only a yes or no answer:

4. Did a staff person contact you to follow-up on your listing to identify whether you had filled your opening or whether the system was generating referrals to job seekers?
5. Did you have to adjust your listing to expand the number of job seekers responding to referrals?
6. Was the person you hired to fill the opening referred from the Maine JobLink?
7. Would you recommend Maine JobLink to other employers?

As with the previous survey, a space of 500 characters will be available for comment.

WIOA Participant Survey

A WIOA participant survey will be conducted to identify the location from which the individual received services, the ability to identify which services from a menu of 17 services they may have received. It will ask whether they were employed in the occupation for which they received training and queried their satisfaction with the following questions:

1. How satisfied were you with the ease of access to, and use of, the CareerCenter facility, equipment, and materials?
2. How satisfied were you with the staff who assisted you?
3. How satisfied were you with the employment and training service provided?

4. If applicable, how satisfied were you with supportive services provided, such as assistance with the cost of child care or transportation?

A space of 500 characters was provided for comment.

Maine JobLink self-services job match tool

Finally, a survey will be conducted with job seekers using the Maine JobLink self-services job match tool. Job seeker satisfaction will query participants with the following questions:

1. How satisfied were you with the self-service process for finding and applying to job openings in Maine JobLink?
2. How satisfied were you with staff assistance provided on the use of Maine JobLink?
3. How satisfied were you with the number and quality of referrals to jobs in Maine JobLink?
4. How satisfied were you with the Resume-Builder tool in Maine JobLink?

The following questions required only a yes or no answer and space to input one answer and one comment:

5. Were you able to access information on specific occupations and/or career pathways?
6. Were you able to access information on training providers and/or other resources?
7. Would you recommend Maine JobLink to other job seekers?
8. Did you use other job search assistance resources in addition to Maine JobLink?
9. If yes, please list:
10. Did you attain a job through Maine JobLink?

One multiple choice question will allow survey participants to identify how they accessed the Maine JobLink system:

11. How did you access Maine JobLink? Check all that apply:
 - a. Personal Computer
 - b. Smartphone
 - c. CareerCenter Computer
 - d. Other

As with all the prior surveys, space for 500 characters will allow for a comment.